



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

communiqué

N°:
No.: 02

January 7, 1986.

AFRICAN VISIT OF THE HONOURABLE MONIQUE VEZINA
MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS
JANUARY 7-17, 1986

The Honourable Monique Vézina, Minister for External Relations, will visit Gabon, Sénégal and Niger from January 7 to 17, 1986. The purpose of this official visit is twofold: the Minister will hold consultations with the highest authorities of these countries on the Francophone Summit, scheduled for Paris, February 17 to 19; in the three countries visited, she will chair bilateral commissions and take the opportunity to discuss Canada's political, economic and trade relations with these countries.

During this tour, Mrs. Vézina will also visit a number of cooperation projects set in motion by the Canadian International Development Agency. In Libreville, Dakar and Niamey she will meet with groups of Canadian business leaders who are already active in this part of the World or who have taken this opportunity to study the potential of these countries.

In Gabon, Mrs. Vézina will lead the Canadian delegation to the third session of the Canada-Gabon Bilateral Commission. She will engage in talks with members of the government covering international issues of interest of both parties. During her visit, Mrs. Vézina will take part in laying the cornerstone for the new Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation building, designed and built by a Canadian firm.

While in Sénégal, Mrs. Vézina will lead the Canadian party to the third session of the Bilateral Commission. Canada has close relations with Sénégal, where for many years the Canadian International Development Agency cooperation programs have met with exemplary results.

Mrs. Vézina's official visit to Niger will coincide with the regular bilateral consultations on the cooperation program, the opening session of which she will chair. She will sign a general development cooperation agreement with her Nigerian

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counterpart that will establish the main themes for Canadian intervention in the development of Niger. The agreement is also part of an effort to establish a new socio-ecological balance in the Sahel, a subject that has recently been examined extensively in reaction to the repeated periods of drought that have stricken the countries in the region. Niger is striving to conquer this blight and has recently launched some original projects for food self-development.

The delegation led by Mrs. Vézina will consist of Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon, MP for Beauharnois-Salaberry and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for External Relations, Mr. Marc Brault, Assistant Deputy Minister for Africa and the Middle East in the Department of External Affairs, Mr. Pierre Racicot, Vice President of the Francophone Africa Branch in the Canadian International Development Agency, and Mr. Robert Letendre, Mrs. Vézina's Chief of Staff.